

Remarks

Applicant respectfully submits that entry of this amendment is proper as it places the application in condition for allowance. Furthermore, the only amendments to the claims reflect the incorporation of limitations that the Examiner has indicated to be allowable. As such, consideration of the amendment would not require further searching and would require only minimal consideration by the Examiner.

Claims 14-23 are pending. Claims 14-17 and 19-23 have been rejected and claims 18 and 23 have been objected to but noted to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. By the foregoing Amendment, claims 14-15, 17-18, 20-21 and 23 are amended, and claim 19 is canceled. No new matter is added by this Amendment. Entry of the Amendment, and favorable consideration thereof, is earnestly requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has indicated that claims 18 and 23, both originally dependent on claim 14, would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim (claim 14). Accordingly, for the sole purpose of expediting prosecution, independent claim 14 has been amended to incorporate all the limitations of allowed claim 23. Claims 15-17 and 20-22 are dependent on amended claim 14 (now incorporating allowed claim 23), and hence, are likewise allowable. Allowed claim 18 has been rewritten in independent form to incorporate all limitations of previously presented claim 14 from which it previously depended. Amended claim 23, now dependent on allowed claim 18, is likewise allowable. Claims 15, 17 and 20-21 have been amended to correct informalities therein. These amendments are made for the sole purpose of expediting prosecution, and Applicant reserves the right to pursue previously presented claims 14-17 and 20-23 in a continuation application.

Objection to the Specification

The Examiner has objected to the November 15, 2004 amendment to the specification under 35 U.S.C. §132(a) stating it introduces new matter into the disclosure. Specifically, the Examiner has objected to the description of figure 14b as having a first end and second end shown as being “substantially the same size and normal to the axis” and states that it is questionable as to whether it is shown “of substantially the same configuration in plan view.”

Applicant herein has amended the specification to remove the language objected to by the Examiner. These elements have also been removed from claim 14.

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner has rejected claims 19 under 35 U.S.C. §112, ¶2, as indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claims the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention. Applicant has canceled claim 19 in order to overcome the Examiner's rejection.

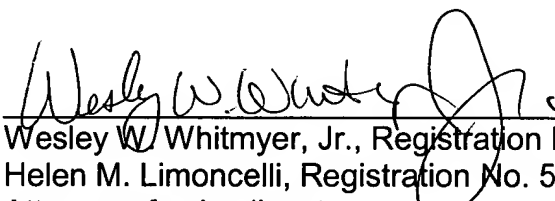
Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

The Examiner has rejected claims 14-17 and 20-22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,027,089 to Maharg *et al.* Applicant respectfully asserts that the rejection is traversed by the present claim amendments which incorporate into all of the pending claims the limitations of previously presented claims 18 and/or claim 23 which were indicated to be allowable by the Examiner.

Conclusion

It is respectfully submitted that claims 14-18 and 20-23, all claims remaining in the application, are in order for allowance, and early notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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